



**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Student: **Michael Higley-Vance**

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Academic integrity: All work submitted in each course must be your own original work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by your instructor. Knowingly submitting another person's work as your own, without properly citing the source of the work, is considered plagiarism. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course. It may also result in academic dismissal from the University.

EL7010-8

Dr. Linda Collins

Online Learning for the K-12 Students

Activity #6: Communicating with the K-12 Student

Comments: Below you will find much of the written assignment expectations however, to continue adding to my electronic portfolio I've included a wiki page link with the paper and a detailed outline of Web 2.0 communication tools suitable for students in the K-12 learning environment. Link to Assignment Here --> <http://e-learninghigley.wikispaces.com/EL7010-8-6>

Faculty Use Only

Hi, Michael, these are excellent examples and comprehensive information on how to communicate with middle school students in the online environment. Your introduction in you wiki and in this paper is clearly presented and sets the foundation for the discussion including talking about distributed learning and comments from students regarding the learning environment. You have included some important

tools and provided substantiating literature that supports the use of these. Visual thesaurus is an excellent visual tool and your provision of an example for communication within the wiki helps to demonstrate how it works. I have always liked worldle, it provides patterns and themes which help with critical thinking and the resulting image can be used in a variety of ways as well. Glogster provides a creative learning process to create a collage of related information that can also be video and audio as well. Google drive is gaining in popularity and trust and as you stated is great for taking notes and for collaboration. I had not heard of PhotoPeach, but the examples are very engaging and easy to watch. I will have to try this out myself. How many of these tools might you introduce in a class? Is there a potential of using too many different tools where the students would have information overload or, is this the stuff that gets the students interested and engaged? The presentation tools you included can be used in a variety of ways for a number of purposes both instructor led/developed and for student exploration and collaboration. I can see how many of these tools will be valuable, engaging, and interesting as you develop your signature project. Dr. Collins

Dr. Linda D. Collins 7 3 April 14, 2014

Communicating with the Online Middle School Student

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Communicating with the Online Middle School Student

Communicating with students in a traditional classroom environment is often demonstrated through lectures, verbal and written exchanges, and face-to-face dialogue. These forms of communication often occur during real time or what is also considered synchronous communications. However, communicating in the online classroom is mostly asynchronous and requires purposeful and thoughtful planning for effective learning to occur. Online communication is often demonstrated through classroom discussions, written exchanges, and collaborative learning activities. The student level upon which this paper focuses is that of a middle school student, an adolescent between the ages of 11-14 years old. The issues that can be present when teaching this particular student population online are vast, and vary greatly depending on the students' comfort with technology, prior educational online experience, and the ability to be a self-motivated learner (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014; Levin-Goldberg, 2011). The issues in communicating with the middle school will be addressed here along with specific

methods of online instruction and supporting technology that will closely align with the learning needs of a middle school student.

Online Communication

Many of the teaching and learning activities found in an online learning environment are similar to those found in a traditional classroom. However, unlike a traditional classroom where communicating happens primarily in a synchronous fashion (Dede, 1996), in an online environment communication is delayed and happens in both synchronous and asynchronous ways (Warschauer, 2001). Communicating in an online learning environment is typically demonstrated through product based learning activities using information technology applications and Web 2.0 tools and resources (Cook & Pachler, 2012). Synchronous and asynchronous communication techniques are important to the online classroom and serve specific purposes in supporting instruction (Lalonde, 2011; Ravenscroft, 2011). Both forms of communication can be effective if the instructor carefully considers the learning objectives, grade level, and expected technology use prior to planning instructional activities (Lalonde, 2011; Ravenscroft, 2011; Best et al., 2014).

Both synchronous and asynchronous online instructional delivery methods have benefits (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014; Dede, 2012). The term used for online learning situations that include both, synchronous and asynchronous learning strategies, is called “distributed learning”. Distributed learning is a term used to describe an educational learning experience dispersed across a wide geographical range and across various interactive media (Dede, 1996). In a study conducted by Dede he noted many students indicated that synchronous online media, such as simultaneous postings and interactive media, helped them understand content more easily and form learning relationships with others (1996). Additionally, other students reported

that the use of asynchronous tools such as online discussions and e-portfolios also positively influenced their participation and learning when attempting to master learning objectives, Dede adds. Based on the research it appears that digital teaching and communication applications enhance learning process in innovative ways.

Communication Responsibilities

The instructor's responsibilities in an online middle school learning environment require effective and engaging dialogue (Levin-Goldberg, 2011; Warschauer, 2001). Teaching online requires a pedagogical philosophy, which adheres to meeting students' educational needs and learning goals (Lalonde, 2011). Instructors should explicitly state the learning objectives to help aid in the learning process Warschauer (2001) noted. As the emphasis of online learning environments grow in the 21st century, so too does the responsibilities of the instructor (Levin-Goldberg, 2011). Finally, the instructor must serve as facilitator and guide for productive online teaching, communication, and learning to occur (Ravenscroft, 2011; Siriaraya, Tang, Ang, Pfeil, & Zaphiris, 2011). The student responsibilities also require frequent and engaging dialogue (Ravenscroft, 2011). Learning online requires students to be self-motivated, engaged, and reflective learners (Cook & Pachler, 2012).

Online Communication Tools

There are several Web 2.0 tools and resources specific to communicating online suitably geared for the K-12 student (Dede, 2012) and more importantly the middle school student. As with any teaching strategy or learning tool, the results are only as good as the planning and performance task expectations (Levin-Goldberg, 2011). Web 2.0 communication tools and resources used by the middle school student are typically project-based and collaborative in nature. It is becoming routine for online instructors to offer students the resources and tools

needed to be successful in online learning environments (Dede, 2012; Porter, Donthu, MacElroy, & Wydra, 2011; Ravenscroft, 2011). These kinds of authentic online learning tools enhance a student's learning experiences, which connect students to real world problem based learning situations (Berg, 2011; Cook & Pachler, 2012; Levin-Goldberg, 2011). With this understood, below are some Web 2.0 resources and ways they can effectively be used to enhance online communication with middle school students. Resources described below include, where possible, middle school student examples of Web 2.0 applications used to positively enhance their online learning experiences and demonstrate mastery of the stated learning objectives. According to Dede (2012), there is over 20 years of supporting research, which demonstrates the effectiveness of Web 2.0 resources when used to enhance online learning experiences.

Please see link for additional information connected to the three main ideas below intended to support this paper's overall purpose at <http://e-learninghigley.wikispaces.com/EL7010-8-6>. The following headings and information appear: (a) Communication Aides – Visual Thesaurus and Wordle, (b) Collaborative Communication Tools – Glogster, Google Drive, PhotoPeach, and Voicethread, and finally (c) Presentation Only Tools – Animoto, GoAnimate, Storybird, and ToonDoo.

Conclusion

Realizing the full potential of online communication technologies takes an instructor who is open to multiple forms of learning strategies and one who will allow learners to communicate mastery using a variety of online tools and resources. It will also require a comprehensive understanding and knowledge about the fundamental best practices of effective e-learning. The online instructor must understand how to utilize online learning techniques to best support the instructional task and encourage middle school students to communicate their learning through

Web 2.0 applications. These applications must support engaging, collaborative, and reflective learning outcomes through social learning communities where students are engaged in purposeful dialogue and exposed to different learning perspectives, which is a critical element in a K-12 online learning environment (Best et al., 2014; Dede, 2012; Levin-Goldberg, 2011; Porter et al., 2011).

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